

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 05057 211540Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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P R 202217Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8856
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5057

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: ROLDOS GAINS SUPPORT WHILE MAKING ASSURANCES

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. A CENTER-LEFT CONSENSUS APPEARS TO BE DEVELOPING AROUND THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY OF JAIME ROLDOS. WHILE THE LIBERAL PARTY'S POSITION FOR THE SECOND VOTING ROUND IS UNDECIDED, THE RADICAL ALFARIST FRON AND THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT SEEM ON THE VERGE OF GIVING ROLDOS THEIR OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT. VELASCO IBARRA HAS VIRTUALLY DONE SO IN COMMENTS ON THE JULY 16 ELECTION. ROLDOS HAS INITIATED A CAMPAIGN TO SOOTHE THE VESTED INTERESTS WORRIED BY HIS STRONG CANDIDACY, AND HIS RUNNING MATE, OSWALDO HURTADO, HAS STRONGLY DENIED ACCUSATIONS OF COMMUNIST PROCLIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH NONE OF THE LOSERS IN THE JULY 16 ELECTIONS HAS OFFICIALLY DECLARED A POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE RUN-OFF ELECTION BETWEEN JAIME ROLDOS AND SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN, A CENTER-LEFT CONSENSUS THAT WOULD ASSURE ROLDOS AN EASY
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VICTORY SEEMS TO BE EMERGIN. ABDON CALDERON, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE RADICAL ALFARIST FRONT (FRA), HAS CHARACTERIZED ROLDOS' FIRST-ROUND WIN AS A PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE OLIGARCHY, AND ALTHOUGH HE SAID THAT ROLDOS WOULD PROBABLY BE SOFTER AGAINST THE OLIGARCHY THAN WOULD HE, CALDERON IS OBVIOUSLY LEANING TOWARD A ROLDOS DENDORSEMENT. RODRIGO BORJA INDICATED THAT DEMOCRATIC

LEFT WOULD PLAY A ROLE IN THE SECOND ROUND AND HINTED STRONGLY THAT HIS PARTY AND THE ROLDOS TICKET WERE IDEOLOGICALLY COMPATIBLE. IN MAKING THERESE REMARKS, THE FORMER CANDIDATES COULD NOT HAVE BEEN UNMINDFUL OF THE CONTINUING POPULAR SWELL TOWARD ROLDOS.

3. THE STANCE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY AND ITS ELECTORAL COALITION (NATIONL DEMOCRATIC UNITY FRONT) REMAINS OBSCURE GIVEN THAT THE LIBERALS HAVE NOT YET ACCEPTED DEFEAT AND PUBLICLY ANTICIPATE CONFIRMATIO OF RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA'S SECOND-PLACE FINISH IN THE FIRST ROUND WHEN ALL THE VOTES ARE COUNTED AND THE OFFICIAL RESULTS ANNOUNCED (SEPTTEL). IN ANY CASE, FANCISCO (PANCHO) HUERTA, WHO MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE ALREADY RESUMED THE POSITION OF LIBERAL PARTY NATIONAL DIRECTOR, HAS REJECTED A BID FROM CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER RAFAEL ARMIJOS TO SUPPORT DURAN-BALLEN IN THE RUNOFF ELECTION. THE YOUNG HUERTA HAS HINTED TO THE EMBASSY THAT HE MAY ENDORSE ROLDOS AS A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE OR REMAIN NEUTRAL. THE LIBERAL VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ARSENIO VIVANCO STATED PUBLICLY THAT THE LIBERALS ARE CLOSER IDEOLOGICALLY TO ROLDOS' CONCENTRATION OF POPULAR FORCES (CFP) THAN TO THE CONSERVATIVES. SHOULD RAUL CLEMENTE HUERTA EMERGE AS ROLDOS' RUNOFF COMPETITION, HE WOULD BE EXPECTED TO GARNER A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE THAT WENT TO DURAN-BALLEN ON THE FIRST ROUND, BUT HIS ABILITY TO GO BEYOND

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THAT WOULD SEEM TO BE LIMITED.

4. A SURPRISING ELEMENT IN THE GROWING TREND TOWARD ROLDOS WERE REMARKS TELEPHONED FROM BUENOS AIRES BY FIVE-TIME EX-PRESIDENT JOSE MARIA VELASCO IBARRA IN WHICH HE ESSENTIALLY ENDORSED A ROLDOS PRESIDENCY. VELASCO COMMENTED THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS WERE A LESSON TO THE DICTATORSHIP AND THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD AFFIRM IN THE SECOND ROUND THE OUTCOME OF THE FIRST. ASSUMING THAT ROLDOS WILL TRIUMPH, VELASCO EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE THAT ROLDOS HAVE A GOVERNMENT OF LIBERTY, JUSTICE AND GRADUAL PROGRESS. ROLDOS' FIRST-ROUND VICTORY SEEMED TO PROMPT VELASCO FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE RETORNO MECHANISM BEGAN TO CONCEDE THE VIABILITY OF THE PROCESS. THE EFFECT OF VELASCO'S WORDS CAN ONLY ASSIST ROLDOS.

5. ROLDOS HAS RESPONDED TO THE INDICATIONS OF HIS GROWING POPULARITY BY ACKNOWLEDGING THE EXISTENCE OF VARIOUS PROGRESSIVE SECTORS WHICH CAN JOIN TOGETHER TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL CHANGE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. CHARGING THAT THE OLIGARCHY WAS TRYING TO GOAD THE MILITARY INTO A NEW ADVENTURE, HE HAS ALSO BEGUN AN ACTIVE CAMPAIGN TO

REASSURE VESTED INTERESTS THAT HE DOES NOT POSE A THREAT. RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ROLDOS SAYS HE REQUIRES ONLY RECTITUDE AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL STIMULATE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH. HE HAS DENIED RUMORS OF HIS INTENTION TO CONFISCATE PRIVATE PROPERTY OR INITIATE A MARXIST EXPERIMENT. ROLDOS STATES THAT THE CHANGES HE AND HIS RUNNING MATE OSWALDO HURTADO PROPOSE ARE WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITION AND WILL NOT BE TAKEN TO EXTREMES OR INCITE CHAOS.

6. HURTADO HAS SIMILARLY TAKEN UP THE FIGHT TO DISPEL ACCUSATIONS OF HIS COMMUNIST PROCLIVITIES. HE DENIED THE VALIDITY OF THE CHARGES IN A TELEVISION APPEARANCE AND
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A PAID POPULAR DEMOCRACY NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT EXCORIATED THE EFFORT TO PAINT HIM AS A COMMUNIST IN CAMOUFLAGE. THE AD WENT ON TO ASSEMBLE HURTADO'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS AND DESCRIBE HIS OPPOSITION TO ALL FORMS OF TOTALITARIANISM. IN A NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW ON JULY 20 HURTADO SAID FLATLY, "I AM NOT NOW, NEVER HAVE BEEN, NOR WILL I EVER BE A COMMUNIST," ADDING THAT HIS IDEAS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRATIC.
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